



Clinical Update

For Telephone Triage Nurses

October 2014

Page 1 of 2

In This Issue

The Great American Smokeout

Efforts to Curb Tobacco Use/Dependence

Proven Strategies and Treatments

The “5 A’s” approach



The Cost of Smoking

In the U.S., a person who smokes a pack/day spends about \$2000 per year on cigarettes.

Tobacco use costs the U.S. an estimated \$289 billion each year due to direct medical care and lost productivity (CDC).

Smoking Cessation – Tips for Helping Callers Quit

The *Great American Smokeout* will take place on Thursday, November 20th. This is an annual event sponsored by the American Cancer Society. Smokers are encouraged to make a plan to quit smoking on this day—for good or for at least 24 hours. Quitting for even a day could be a smoker’s first step towards a healthier and longer life.

Encouraging smokers to participate in this event is just one way telephone triage nurses can promote smoking cessation. Triage nurses have many opportunities to educate callers about the dangers of smoking.

NOVEMBER 2014						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

In addition, telephone triage nurses can be readily available to support smokers’ quit attempts when the doctor’s office is closed. A brief supportive phone contact could help a caller take one step closer to becoming smoke-free for life.

Efforts to Curb Tobacco Abuse/Dependence

- Over the past 50 years, much progress has been made. Mass media campaigns, smoke free policies, and targeted medical and counseling interventions have all been shown to be effective in reducing tobacco use.
- The number of US adults who smoke has dropped significantly—from 42.4% in 1965 to 18.1% in 2012. The number of ex-smokers now exceeds the number of smokers (CDC).
- However, there is still much work to be done to reduce tobacco use.
- About one out of every 5 adults (42 million) in the U.S. smokes. Each day, approximately 4000 US children and teens smoke their first cigarette (Fiore et al., 2009).
- Cigarette smoking continues to be the leading cause of preventable death. It accounts for more than 480,000 U.S. deaths each year. About 41,000 of these deaths are due to secondhand smoke (CDC).
- On average, a cigarette smoker will die 10 years earlier than a nonsmoker.
- The good news is that about 2/3 of U.S. smokers reported they wanted to quit smoking. Over 50% of these smokers reported they made a quit attempt in the past year (CDC, 2011).
- On average, a smoker makes 4 – 5 attempts to quit before succeeding. Thus, ongoing contact and support are very important to the smoker who is trying to quit.
- Every health care provider who interacts with a patient who smokes can make a difference. Strategies that have been shown to help smokers quit are discussed in the next section.

Clinical Update

For Telephone Triage Nurses

October 2014

Page 2 of 2



Proven Strategies and Treatments to Increase Quit Rates

- Brief clinical interventions: For example, a doctor or nurse takes 10 minutes or less to deliver focused advice and assistance.
- Counseling: Individual, group, or telephone (e.g., Quit Line)
- Behavioral therapy: Problem-solving, skills training
- Nicotine replacement: Gum, lozenges, inhaler, nasal spray, patch
- Prescription medicines: Bupropion SR (Zyban); Varenicline (Chantix)

The 5 A's Approach

- The "5 A's" is a useful, simple strategy all providers can use when helping smokers quit. The 5 A's are **Ask, Advise, Assess, Assist, and Arrange**.
- Here are some examples of when the nurse triager might use this approach:
 - Patient who smokes has symptoms aggravated by smoking (e.g., asthma)
 - Caregiver who smokes calls about a child who has symptoms known to be aggravated by secondhand smoke (e.g., ear infections, asthma)
 - Patient who smokes has questions about quitting or needs assistance to quit

Using The 5 A's Strategy For Helping Patients Quit Smoking

ASK	Ask about tobacco use.	<i>"How much do you smoke?" "How long have you been a smoker?"</i>
ADVISE	Advise to quit. Use a personal and direct manner.	<i>"Quitting now is the most important thing you can do to protect your health." "Your smoking may be making your child's asthma worse. Quitting is one of the most important things you can do to reduce your child's asthma attacks."</i>
ASSESS	Assess patient's readiness to quit.	<i>"Are you willing to give quitting a try?" "Have you tried quitting before? "What have you tried?"</i>
ASSIST	Assist the patient with quitting. Provide advice and support.	<i>"Set a quit date within the next 2 weeks. Remove all tobacco products from your home before this date." "Tell your family, friends and co-workers that you are quitting and that you need their support."</i>
ARRANGE	Arrange for a follow-up appointment. Enlist additional support.	<i>"Make an appointment with your doctor. Your doctor may recommend medicines that can help you quit." "Here is the number of National Quit Line (800-784-8669). Counselors are available to support and advise you."</i>

A new adult triage guideline released this year, **Smoking – Tobacco Abuse and Dependence**, is now available to triage nurses. The guideline includes key messages using the "5 A's" approach and practical advice for smokers who want to quit.

References

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Quitting smoking among adults – United States, 2001-2010. *MMWR* November 11, 2011/60(44); 1513-1519.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Smoking and tobacco use. Accessed 8/1/14: <http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/index.htm>
- Fiore MC, Jaén CR, Baker TB, et al. Treating tobacco use and dependence: 2008 update. Quick reference guide for clinicians. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Public Health Service. April 2009.

Co-Author:
Jeanine Feirer, RN, MSN

Copyright 2014.
Schmitt-Thompson
Clinical Content

Barton Schmitt, M.D.
David Thompson, M.D.